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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to draw attention to examples of negative customary practice and obsolete traditions that thwart female access to education, female emancipation, and their ultimate empowerment. The information is organized in five sections. Sections 1 and 2 present an historical review of female education in Sub-Saharan Africa and the status of female education in Ghana. Typical examples of obsolete customary practices are examined in Section 3. The benefits of educating girls are discussed in Section 4, while Section 5 analyzes the implications of all types of discrimination towards female education. Benefits to a nation when females are educated are reviewed, such as lower birthrate, improved family nutrition, increased life expectancy, and economic gains for the family. A number of policies and programs are presented that have been put into place or are suggested to eradicate the cultural, customary, and traditional practices that work against female child education. (Contains 15 references, 5 tables, and 1 figure.) (JDM)

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THE IMPACT OF CUSTOM AND TRADITION IN EDUCATING THE FEMALE-CHILD IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA

A PAPER PRESENTED

BY

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

THE IMPACT OF CUSTOM AND TRADITION IN EDUCATING THE FEMALE CHILD IN SUB-SARAHAN AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA

Education, more than any other single initiative has the capacity to foster development, awaken talent, empower people and protect their rights (UNICEF 2000). Investing in Education is therefore the surest, most direct way a country can promote its own economic and social welfare and lay the foundation for a democratic society. In view of this, every child needs to be given the opportunity and the necessary support to secure and benefit from full access and opportunity to education.

Despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to "Education for All" declared in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and after a decade of adopting the convection of the Rights of the child (UN 1989), "more than 130 million primary school-age children in developing countries are out of school, two-thirds of whom are girls" (UNICEF 2000). Many of these deprived girls are saddled with domestic obligations and household chores, many limited by traditions in which families consider school cost of education to high to pay when it comes to their daughters; and still others living at such long distances from school that travel is a risk to their health and well-being (UNICEF 2000). In fact, not only is this a violation to children right to education but also a great loss of talent, capacity and human resource.

This paper which focuses on the "Impact of Custom and Tradition in Educating the Female -Child in Sub-Saharan Africa, notable Ghana" seeks to draw attention to examples of negative customary practices and obsolete traditions that thwart female access to education, female emancipation and ultimate empowerment. The paper is divided into five sections. Section one presents a historical review of female education in Sub-Saharan Africa, and also discusses the status of female education in the Sub-region focusing on Ghana. Typical examples of obsolete customary practices and outdated traditions that impede female access and opportunity to formal education, female emancipation and empowerment are examined in section three. The benefits of educating girls/female are discussed in section four while section five analyses the implication to all types of discrimination towards female education. Attention is also drawn to policies and measures that have already been put in place (and can be adopted) to foster female emancipation and female empowerment through the provision and acquisition of female education.

THE STATUS OF FEMALE EDUCATION: ACCESS

The near exclusion of women from formal education during the colonial period is reflected in the low level of female participation by 1960 and the impression growth in the enrollment since then. Some reasons assigned to this included the threats of female chastity, the apprehension that educated girls will not make "controllable" obedient" and "Subservient" wives' and the widely held belief that it was a waste of money to educate a girl who will leave home on marriage and not contribute to the maintenance of her natal home (Larson, 1991).

In the early 1960s, less than 20% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa were in school. Since then the proportion of children in school has more than tripled to approximately 80 million in 1990 (DAE 1994). This growth has however not be maintained. Table 1 below shows the gross enrolment ratio by gender and level in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970-1990.

TABLE 1

GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO BY GENDER AND LEVEL IN SUB-SARAHAN AFRICA, 1970 - 1990

					Average Percentage		Annual Change
	1970	1980	1985	1990	70-80	80-85	85.90
Primary enrolment (000's)	24,776	52,592	52,295	64032	7.9	1.9	2.0
Female as % of total	39	43	45	45			
Gross primary enrolment ratio	46	78	75	70			
Male	56	88	83	77			
Female	36	68	67	63			
Secondary enrolment (000's)	2694	9243	12528	14571	13.6	6.1	3.2
Female as % of total	29	35	39	40			
Gross Secondary enrolment ratio	6	16	22	21			
Male	8	21	26	25			
Female	4	11	18	19			
Tertiary enrolment (000's)	189	419	819	1219	8.1	15.4	7.1
Female as % of total	16	21	30	31			
Gross Tertiary enrolment ratio	0.5	1.3	2.2	2.6			
Male	0.9	2.1	3.1	3.7			
Female	0.2	0.5	1.2	1.7			

SOURCE: DAE 1994, Adihambo1995

From the table, although the percentage of females who enrolled in primary education increased from 43% in 1980 to 45% in 1990, the proportion of primary school-age children in school declined from 78% to 70% in that same period, (1980 – 90). This was due to the adverse economic condition and population growth resulting in stagnation in enrolment and a decline in education quality. At the secondary level, the percentage of female to the total number of pupils on row increased from 35% in 1980 to 40% in 1990, whilst the proportion of secondary school-age children in school increased from 16% in 1980 to 21% in 1990, although that was 1% point below the figure of 1985. Again the significant increase in enrolment after the 1960s is depilated by the average annual percentage change of 7.9% being an increase in enrolment for 1970 – 1980 at the primary level. At the secondary level the average annual percentage change was 13.2% for the same period (1970-80).

In spite of the above, comparative data for Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East indicate that in 1991 both the gross primary and secondary enrolment ratios were significantly lower in Sub-Saharan African declined from 68 in 1970 to 48 in 1991 (World Bank, 1994). This is a clear indication of the large number of children who remain outside the formal education systems. Across the sub-region, female enrolments contributed significantly to the increase in enrolment, increasing faster than males. This rapid growth has however slow down in recent years.

Table 2 below shows the gross primary enrolment data for some selected countries in Sub-Saharan African between the periods 1960 to 1990.

TABLE 2

GROSS PRIMARY ENROLMENT FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES IN SUB-SARAHAN AFRICA, 1960 – 1990.

COUNTRY	1960		1970		1980		1990	
SUB-SARAHAN AFRICAN	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(OVERALL)	48	22	56	36	88	68	75	61
ANGOLA	23	11	98	53	187	163	95	87
BOTSWANA	36	41	63	67	84	100	114	119
CAMEROON	77	37	105	78	107	89	109	93
CHAD	29	4	52	17	52	19	90	39
ETHIOPIA	11	4	47	9	45	25	36	26
GHANA	60	32	71	54	89	71	84	69
MAIL	13	5	29	16	34	19	30	17
NIGERIA	54	31	46	27	118	90	82	63
SOMALIA	10	3	9	3	24	14	13	17
TANZANIA	33	6	41	26	99	86	69	68
UGANDA	64	30	46	29	56	43	85	70
ZIMBABWE	83	66	78	63	92	79	117	116

Source: DAE 1994, Adhiambo 1995

NOTE:

Male and female enrolment by students of all ages are expressed as a percentage of the total male and female population of school age to obtain gross enrolment ratios. In many countries, the official primary school age group is 6 – 11 years. The means are weighted by the school-age population Estimates of school-age population used in the calculation are the 1992 Population Revision of the United Population Division.

From *Table 2*, female enrolment ratio in Ghana rose from 32 percentage in 1960 to 71 percent in 1980 and then fell to 69 percent in 1990. For war-torn Somalia, the corresponding numbers are 3, 14 and 17 whilst that of Zimbabwe in 1960 was 66 percent, then later rose to 79 in 1980 and then further higher to 116 percent for 1990. Within the Sub-region, the gender gap in education appears wildest in the Sahelian Countries of Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mail where overall enrolment are also low by regional standards (DAE 1994). For example, female enrolment in Mali was 5

percent in 1960 then rose to 19 in 1980 and later fell in 1990 to 17 percent. Significant gender gap persist desire the growth of female enrolment ratios widening as one gets up the education ladder. In 1990, girls made up 45 percent of primary students, 40 percent of secondary student and 31 percent of tertiary level student in the sub-region (refer to Table 1).

Comparative data for Ghana and Zimbabwe shows that the average enrolment rate for girls in Ghana is very low, if not alarming considering the fact that she (Ghana) was the first nation worldwide, to implement the "Right to Education" policy by the UN General Assembly (1989), and for that matter the first in the sub-region.
Table 3, shows the national enrolment of primary public schools in Ghana and Zimbabwe in percentages. The table has been presented for comparison reasons.

NATIONAL ENTROLMENT OF PRIMARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN GHANA AND ZIMBABWE (IN PERCENTAGE)

Gender	Country	YEAR				
		1991-92	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
Girls	Ghana	44.99%	45.46%	45.69%	45.85%	46.10%
	Zimbabwe	49.47%	48.11%	49.68%	49.92%	49.02%
Boys	Ghana	55.01%	54.54%	54.31%	54.15%	53.90%
	Zimbabwe	50.53%	50.9%	50.32%	50.58%	50.98%

Sources: **Statistics office, Ministry of Education, Ghana 1997**
Paper presented by Gumbochuma, W.1995

In *Table 3*, girls in Zimbabwe benefit alongside boys at primary schools where enrolment is almost equal. The enrolment ratio is consistently 1 percent point lower than that of boys. From table 3, the average enrolment of boys between 1990 and 1994 has been 50.8 percent whilst that of girls has been 49.2 percent. Similarly, there is no significant different in between the dropout level ratio of girls and boys at primary school level.

The picture in Ghana for the female-child is not the same. Girls' enrolment falls far below their male-counterparts in the public primary schools. The enrolment ratio of girls from Table 3 is consistently about 9 percent point lower than that of boys. The

average enrolment rate between 1990 and 1994 (the same period for Zimbabwe) has been 54.4 percent for boys while that of girls have been 45.6 percent.

In Ghana, the dropout rate differs across the ten region of the country. This is due to the uniqueness and the extend of impact of the factors that work against female education in Ghana.

Table 4 paints the picture of dropout rates of primary school pupils in the Regions; the Distribution is in a descending order.

TABLE 4

DROPOUT RATES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN THE REGIONS, DISTRIBUTIION IN DESCENDING ORDER

HIGHEST ORDER	REGION	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS
1	NORTHERN	1000	307	456
2	UPPER EAST	1000	340	453
3	WESTERN	1000	259	346
4	EASTERN	1000	234	340
5	CENTRAL	1000	230	327
6	UPPER WEST	1000	246	315
7	ASHANTI	1000	182	294
8	BRONG AHAFO	1000	190	282
9	VOLTA	1000	160	265
10	GREATER ACCRA	1000	-83	-22
NATIONAL TOTAL		1000	202	295

SOURCE: STATISTIC SERVICE, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AND GHANA.

An examination of the distribution above (Table 4) especially among girls shows great disparities. At the primary school level, the three Northern Regions (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) and the Western Region have relatively higher dropout rates than the others. For example, in the Northern and Upper East Region, approximately 46 percent of pupils who enrol in primary school dropout before reaching BASIC 6. That is almost a half of girls who begin primary school dropout before completion. At the JSS level, the Eastern Western, and Brong Ahafo are above the other regions in

terms of dropout rate among girls. Also at the district level, East Gonja (Northern Region) Bawku West (Upper East Region) and Wassa Amenfi (Western Region) have as many as seven (7) out of a cohest of ten (10) girls not reaching the BASIC 6, in primary school (Girls' Education Unit, 1997).

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST FEMALE CHILD EDUCATION

Research points to a number of factors that militate against female/girl child education. These include poverty, child labour, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, religion and the Trokosi Cult.

This section of the paper undertakes a critical analysis of these factors and in so doing establishes a basis for the later discussion of their attendant implications for female empowerment and emancipation through education.

POVERTY

Poverty is one of the main factors militating against female education in developing countries, including Sub-Saharan Africa. Studies have shown that one-half of the population Sub-Saharan Africans live below the poverty line, thus earn less than USD 34 a month, with women been the worst hit (Ghana News Agency, June 2000). In Ghana, it is estimated that about 12 million Ghanaians live below the poverty line (UNDP, ISSER Report on Human Development, 2000). This figure forms about two-thirds of the Ghanaian population. Research has shown than "7 in 10 of the world's poor are female" (Awake 1998, June 8). In Sub-Saharan Africa, it has also been establish that poverty is the single cause for the low level of enrolment and retention of girls in schools (UNICEF 2000). This phenomena poverty is multifaceted in nature due to factors such as high fertility rate, massive unemployment and low incomes, large family size, prevalence of subsistence farming practice (largely among women) and globalization. These tie up to make poverty a stank reality in the sub-region.

Sub-Saharan African has the highest population growth rate in the world. In Ghana, the rate of population growth is 3 percent per annum (National Population Council, 1992), whilst some developed nations are recording negative population growth rates e.g. Switzerland and France. The consequence of this overpopulation coupled with certain obsolete customary practices like the "Babu Guan" among some Akan Societies in Ghana (It is the practice where a wife is given a goat by the husband for delivering ten children for him) have led to some couples having large family sizes

across the sub-region. In this regard many in couples find themselves perpetually wallowing the quagmire of abject poverty due to the inability of their meager incomes to support their large families. Such strains on the meager family financial resources and certain misconceptions held about female –education makes the education of girls to play second fiddle to that of boys in most family set ups.

Although, in Ghana basic education is free (Ministry of Education, FCUBE 1995), household expenditure can be very high. Apart from tuition (which is said to be free) others items paid for include, fees for registration and admission, examination, boarding, school building fund, Parents Teachers Association dues (PTA) the cost of uniform the provision of furnish, extra tutorial and transportation. These add up to two or three times the cost of tuition. Studies have shown that in Ghana like Guinea, Malawi and Zimbabwe, the cost associated with schooling are higher for girls than boys mainly as a result of the higher cost of girls uniforms, sanitary protection during menstrual periods and transportation for their safety (Davison and Kenyuka, 1992 Kapakasa, 1992).

In most cases, some parents may not be necessarily poor (that they cannot foot school bills) rather they often misplace their priorities by sacrificing the educational needs of their girl –child on the alter of fashion and social activities like funeral and wedding. In some cases, by virtue of the fact that some of these parents have themselves not benefited from any formal education, they play down the need for their girl-child to have any formal education either. Others also have a deep-rooted notion that if a girl-child is educated to whatever level, she will eventually be confirmed to the kitchen – a place regarded by most men as the "office" of the Ghanaian woman regardless of her academic status.

In light of the above, it is not uncommon for school children, especially the girls to be compelled by their parents and or circumstances to combine their schooling with petty trading working in quarries and head patronage (Kayayo) in the Urban and Para-Urban centres, in a bid to supplement the family's income or fend for them selves. A case in point is Kintampo a major commercial town in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana and Accra the capital city of Ghana. Here, girls sell deep into the night.

This state of affairs, which smacks of child labour, is in contravention of the convention of the Right of the child (UN 1989), and the International Labour

Organization law against child-labour. Girls in this widespread child-labour syndrome are usually aged between 5 years and 14 years. This practice of child labour and child abuse usually results in truancy and absenteeism among these girls especially on market days and festive occasion as profit margin increase as such.

The effect of the twin problem of truancy and absenteeism are dismal academic performance of these girls. They therefore become a laughing stock among their peers (due to their under achievement) and consequently dropout of school or they voluntarily dropout of school in order to concentrate on their business' to make more money, since they have been introduced to money at an early age. Statistics have it that dropout rate in the primary level is 30% and that of JSS is 21% (Girls' Education Unit Brief, 1998).

On a more serious note, the problem of poverty in most Sub-Saharan countries manifests itself overtly in child trafficking, where girls especially are sent to countries within the African Sub-region example Nigeria and Gabon as house helps engage in domestic and economic labour to the detriment of their education. These girls are usually given out in exchange for money, which in most cases go to a middleman or the family of the girl, and not the girl herself.

Currently, there are about 250 million children in child labour worldwide with 32% of them in Sub-Saharan Africa alone (Ghana News Agency, ILO Annual Report, 1999).

Teenage pregnancy constitutes a second major threat to adolescent girls' retention in schools throughout the sub-region. In Ghana, teenage pregnancy is most prevalent among adolescent girls in the Junior Secondary School, who constitutes 70% of the victims to this social canker.

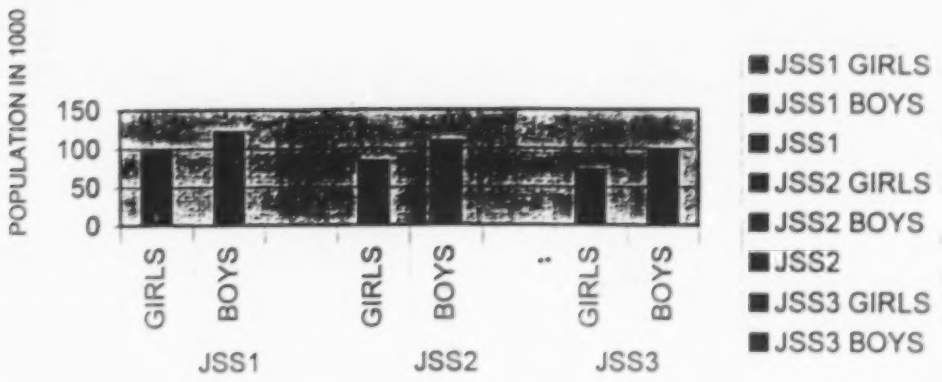
In a recent study, pregnancy was identified as a major cause of drop among adolescent girls in the basic education (Junior Secondary School Level) system, accounting for as high as 41% of the studied group (Girls Education Unit, 1997). In order works, two out of every five J.S.S. Girls who stopped school across the nation in 1994/95 to 1996/97 academic year did so because of pregnancy.

Figure 1 below shows the national enrolment of public J.S.S. Schools for the 1996/97 academic years.

FIG/ 1

NATIONAL ENROLMENT OF PUBLIC JSS SCHOOLS 1996-97 ACADEMIC YEAR

NATIONAL ENROLMENT OF PUBLIC JSS SCHOOLS FOR 1996-97



In figure 1 above, about 122,000 boys as against 100,000 girls were enrolled into JSS 1 for the 1996-97 academic year, showing 22,000 excess boys over girls' enrolment nationwide. With the assumption that an equivalent number of pupils were admitted into the JSS 1 three year back, the figure shows that the total number of students that reach JSS 3 in 1996-97 declined to about 100,000 for boys and 78,000 for girls. In recent times, the dropout rate among JSS girls is 21% (GEU, 1998). The underlying factor responsible for teenage pregnancy are parental irresponsibility and poverty as well as the dropout's biological desires and ignorance of the reproductive system. In recent times, sexual harassment in educational institutions against girls and adolescents in Ghana and other countries in the sub-region has also contributed to the high level of dropout among girls in schools. In rural Ghana, some irresponsible teachers refer to their female students as "bush-allowance' hence abuse and violate these girls sexually to compensate their posting or transfer to the rural area, which they (the teachers) see as punishment. A parent in rural Zimbabwe lamented; " the greatest problem is school pregnancy, (as girls become adolescent), we struggle to raise school fees for them but they disappoint us. This influences us to give priority to the boys, (Graham-Browne, 1991: 195).

Dropout as a third major factor that militates against female education in the sub-region including Ghana. Early marriage and religion have also undermined the efforts to increase female excess and retention in education or school.

Table 4 below shows the enrolment of primary school pupils for 1996/97 for some selected regions in Ghana.

TABLE 5:

NATIONAL ENROLMENT OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOME SELECTED REGIONS IN GHANA: 1996-97 ACADEMIC YEAR

REGION	CLASS	GIRLS	BOYS	% OF GIRLS	% OF BOYS
GREATER ACCRA	P1	24,250	24,173	50.1%	49.9%
	P3	24,882	25,242	49.6%	50.4%
	P6	23,278	24,167	49.1%	50.9%
CENTRAL REGION	P1	21,936	22,477	49.4%	50.6%
	P2	18,837	20,530	47.8%	52.2%
	P3	14,419	17,204	45.6%	54.4%
NORTHERN REGION	P1	18289	26687	40.7%	59.3%
	P3	8211	13988	37.0%	63. %
	P6	5522	10825	33.8%	66.2%

SOURCE: STATISTICS OFFICE, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GHANA

From the table, it can be seen that the problem of female retention in quite grave in the Northern Region of Ghana (just as table 3 depicted). Whereas in the Greater Accra Region, only one percent of pupils who enroll into P1 dropout of school before completing BASIC 6, as high as seven percent (7%) of girls who enroll in P1 in the Northern region dropout before reaching P6.

The causes for such disparities among the regions of Ghana are further discussed below.

Early marriage is one of the causes of the dropout among female adolescent girls especially among the Muslim communities in the Northern region of Ghana. Early child marriage is the practice where an older man may indicate to the parents of a young girl (around age 3) that either himself of his son would like to marry the girl

when she comes of age. If the girl's parents agree, the man usually assumes financial responsibility for her upkeep and education. After the girl reaches the age of puberty, the man decides when she is old enough to become his wife. If the girl is in school, she is invariably withdrawn upon pressure from the man and married off. Within these circumstances girls forgo their education as early as the age of 12 for marriage. The only escape available to such girls as to dropout of school and migrate to urban centres. Quite often, such girls end up as prostitutes, street girls, child labourers and house helps in the cities (since they have no skill for formal employment) and in recent year kayayos (i.e. female head proffers)

Apart from early marriage, religion, especially Islam is also usually associated with low female participation in school (Appleton and other 1990, Cordongh and Lewis, 1993). Some parents prefer Islamic education for their daughters, as the fear that western education promotes values and behaviour for girls which are contrary to cultural norms (often articulated as religious edicts) remain strong (Kane and de Brun, 1993 Brock and Cammish 1991). However, religion is often a proxy for cultural views about appropriate female rotes and its necessary, although difficult to distinguish between these factors. Again in the Northern Regions of Ghana (where Islam is the predominant religion), despite government efforts to promote Basic Education through its tuition and fee free policy (FCUBE 1995) most muslim parents still hold negative attitude towards Western education and prefer Koranic education for their girls (where only Arabic is taught). This to a large extent accounts for the low level of enrolment and a high level of dropout in the three regions in Northern Ghana, namely Northern, Upper East and Upper West Region. The average enrolment rate of girls in these region is 37.2 percent whilst in Greater Accra, where Christianity dominant, the average girls' enrollment 50% (statistics Office PBME, MOE 1997). In spite of the negative effect of Islam on girls education elite Muslim families in the Urban areas education their daughters with enthusiasm.

THE TROKOSI CULT AND ITS IMPACT ON FEMALE – CHILD EDUCATION

One outdated customary practice that deserves attention in this paper such as this is the 'Trokosi Cult. The Trokosi Cult is one customary practice in Ghana, which has resisted change and modernization, obsolete though its goals and system organization, is. Quite distributing is its negative impact on social, and overall national development but most especially on women's emancipation and empowerment through education. The Trokosi Cult is believed to have been in practice in Ghana

since the 1900s. Within the West African Sub-region, it is also practiced in Togo and Benin. Trokosi, which means, "Slave wives of the gods" is a dehumanizing traditional practice found in some parts of the Volta, Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. Also known as 'Fiashidi' or 'woryokwe', the Trokosi Cult requires that young innocent girls be sent into fetish shrines, as reparation for the misdeeds of their family members who might have even is dead. Whilst there, these girls suffer all forms of abuse including sex, physical molestation and violence and gender discrimination. There are about 100 shrines in different parts of these three regions, with over 5000 women and children in servitude at the shrine, (International Needs, Ghana. 1999).

Once offered in atonement for the misdeeds of a relative, these poor girls and women become the wives of the shrine priest and his elders for the rest of their lives. They offer free labour for the economic benefit and sexual gratification of their benefactors. They are not allowed to partake of the fruits of their labour, but must fend for themselves and their children born of their relations with the shrine priests.

This dehumanizing custom has a negative impact on female-child education in the identified regions. These girls are denied their basic human right, which includes access to education and a decent life among others. In certain instances these girls' are with drawn from the classroom and taken into servitude in the shrines.

Although the practice is discriminatory and contravene the International Convention on the "Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women" and also considered as a criminal offence in Ghana (the criminal code [Amendment] Act 1998 Act 554) it remains a part of the Ghanaian society today. Currently, the International Needs, Ghana, an NGO has managed to liberate 2000 of the victims with 3000 still in servitude.

IMPLICATIONS

Girls the world over suffers from sex engendered denial and discrimination in most aspects of life. "The most damaging is the denial of the right and opportunity to Education (UNICEF 1992). It is the lack of access to education that keeps girls and women 'not only at the bottom of the social power structure but may perceive themselves and their future roles as sex objects, sub-servient to and trapped in rather than choosing traditional roles (Gumbochuma1995).

This deprivation of educational opportunity to girls also excludes them from the main stream of development in the future, increases the dependency ratio of the population and results in under development of a nation (Mbanefoh 1994). They also stand the risk of becoming poorer and poorer due to the lack of education. (Awake July 8, 1998).

It is in recognition of these effects that the 'Right to Education' was incorporated into the 'Convention of the Right of the child' by the United Nation General Assembly in 1989. Further, the consequences of these also explain the adoption of 'Basic education for All by the year 2000, and Universal Basic Education for All by 2015 during the World Conference on 'Education for All" in 1990 at Thailand.

There are enormous social and economic gains, which accrue to the individual girl, her family and the society as a result of education.

Some economic benefits include higher family income, faster growth of Gross National Product (GNP), and the possibility of improved participation in more capital intensive areas of self-employment among others (World Bank, 1995:4)

Social benefits that arise from increasing education for girls also includes, lower fertility rate, improved nutrition, increased life expectancy and better opportunity for their children in the next generation. In fact increased female education is not only associated with these benefits sometimes it is the most effective way to achieve these benefit (Floro and Wolf, 1990: 28-30).

POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR ENCOURAGING FEMALE – CHILD EDUCATION

A number of policies and programmes have been put in place by successive governments particularly the present government of Ghana to mitigate, if not completely eradicate, those cultural, customary and traditional practices that work against female-child education in Ghana. These are discussed here. Also, attention is drawn in this section of the paper to other measures and proposals that can be considered by all stakeholders in the female – child educational enterprise.

First, measures considered as "School-related" solutions are examined. The proposed Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE, 1995) for implementation in the period 1996 to 2005 is a laudable idea, which should be

sustained. Here the attention given to girl –child education and enrolment by the Ministry of Education through the establishment of Girls Education Unit (1997) with the aim of increasing the national enrolment of girls is primary schools to equal that of boys by 2005 is highly commendable and should be sustained. To support this initiative, the government of Ghana, together with the Donor Agencies and the NOGs should seriously consider the establishment of Female Education Scholarship Schemes (FESS) for brilliant but needy and poor girls. Doubtlessly, this will go along way to promote female-child education in Ghana; an effort indispensable to the quest for rapid socio-economic development.

Second, it is proposed and recommended that Curriculum innovation that focuses on girls and the development of their academic, intellectual and industrial capacities are undertaken. Here, the Ministry of Education should work on removing gender stereotyping issues and examples from textbooks and also train teachers to be gender neutral when teaching. Sex education should also be introduced at the primary level.

Third, donor agencies and NGOs should continue with their public awareness creation on girl-child Education (as FAWE Ghana) is currently doing on Ghana TV on "send your Girl-child to school". They should also educate people on the negative aspect of the Trokosi Cult. Such agencies as FAWE, Kenyo, UNICEF, DFID, CAMFED and CIDA should work in close collaboration with other women's groups and the government to modernize the practice or eradicate it completely.

District Assemblies in conjunction with local communities should provide community schools with facilitates such as buildings within walking distance. Brilliant girls in the communities should be trained as teachers for them to serve as role model for other girls.

Finally, I do support the call made by the Secretary-General of United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan during his Keynote Address at the "Education For All" Conference held in Dakar, Sierra Leone May 2000, that the world technological Millionaire should invest in the female-child education (as they do for diseases such as Malaria and Aids). This is because a girl who is denied education would be a liability to the whole world tomorrow. Can the other hand, if you educate a girl, you educate a nation, in fact the entire human race.

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